

ARCHAEOLOGY

Country Lost for 20 Centuries Found Without Digging Ruins

“Sealand” is Name Given Nation That Writings Suggest Rivalled Babylonia, Assyria and Chaldean Empire

A GREAT country lost to history for twenty centuries has been discovered by Prof. Raymond P. Dougherty of Yale University. Ancient history will have to be revised, it appears, to make room for this neglected land, its kings, and its people.

Prof. Dougherty has found evidence that in the ancient world there was an important country known as the Sealand, or the Land of the Sea, which covered a large part of the Arabian peninsula.

This Sealand of Arabia has come to light, not by digging up ruins and records—that may come later—but by careful study of disconnected references to such a place in writings of Babylonia and Assyria. Results of these studies have just been reported by Prof. Dougherty in a scientific volume. Prof. Dougherty places the Sealand on the map in Arabia because an accumulation of evidence in cuneiform writings points to that location. An increasing number of cuneiform writings which have been unearthed and turned over to scholars to decipher is yielding the information proving existence of such a country.

Prof. Dougherty outlines the history of the Sealand in three main epochs. The first, lasting from possibly 2500 B.C. to 1000 B.C. was outstanding for intrusion upon affairs of Babylonia. The second from 858 to 626 B.C. was during the height of Assyria's power, and the Sealanders, far from quaking at the Assyrians, played an aggressive role. The third epoch, running late into the sixth century B.C., was the time of the Chaldean Empire. This last Sealand dynasty, Prof. Dougherty says, was a contributing cause to the downfall of Assyria in 616 B.C., thus winning the long rivalry.

The Sealanders were a melting-pot population, judging from present knowledge. Some of their earliest kings had Semitic names, some Sumerian.

The earliest records about these people show that they had already an advanced idea of religion. Their notion of divinity included such concepts as mercy, beneficence, and absoluteness. Ex-

istence of such ideas, Prof. Dougherty says, constitutes a source and an influence which must be taken into consideration in attempts to trace the origin of early Hebrew religious concepts.

How the incongruous-sounding name Sealand might have been given to Arabian country is explained by Prof. Dougherty. Travelers often compare Arabian sand dunes to a billowing sea. Another possible origin of the name is the prevalence of the saline deposits water in Arabia, suggesting the sea.

Scientific excavations have never been welcomed in Arabia, and so far science has had no good opportunity to find out what buried cities and writings lie there.

Science News Letter, December 31, 1932

BACTERIOLOGY

Bacteriophage Makes Germs Swell, Burst and Disappear

THE EXACT process by which bacteriophage destroys bacteria or germs was described by Prof. J. Bronfenbrenner of Washington University Medical School at the meeting of the Society of American Bacteriologists. Watching the bacteria under the microscope, he saw that under the influence of the bacteriophage they swell, burst and disappear.

Further investigation showed that the swelling is the result of imbibing water. This in turn results from digestion within the cell of part of the cell protoplasm and consequent increase of osmotic pressure within the cells.

Before the swelling starts, however, and very soon after the bacteriophage is added, the rate of growth of the bacteria is greatly increased. This acceleration of the processes of growth and digestion is the primary effect of the bacteriophage, Professor Bronfenbrenner concluded. The consequent imbibition of water, swelling, bursting and disappearance of the germs are secondary effects.

Science News Letter, December 31, 1932

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